

Handout
(part 4)

Admiral Turner's Remarks
to the Washington Press Club Editors' Dinner
Washington, D.C. - 11 April 1978

President Eaton, Attorney General Bell, Dr. Webster,
Miss Walters, ladies and gentlemen:

When Bill Webster and I went to college together, there were two famous football players in this land and they called them Mr. Inside and Mr. Outside. Today, in the world of American intelligence you might call Bill Webster Mr. Inside and myself Mr. Outside. His province is inside our country, and mine is out, but clearly there must be very close cooperation and coordination between us. There has, between the FBI and the CIA, developed in recent years a very good and warm, satisfactory working relationship. I know that in the years ahead with Bill Webster at the FBI we can only build upon and continue that good relationship. I am privileged to share this platform with you, Bill, and look forward to working with you in keeping our two agencies close together. Barbara, if he's outside and I'm inside, Mr. Outside and Mr. Inside, I guess that leaves you Miss In-between. And I guess I don't dare suggest closer collaboration between ABC and CIA, but I am privileged to share this platform with you also. Because I have these two superstars coming behind me, I'll try to be brief and highlight for you what I think are four exciting and important trends in American intelligence activities today.

The first is that we are changing our product. If you look back 30 years from last September when we first organized a Central Intelligence Agency for this country, the primary product in those days

was military intelligence about the Soviet Union. How much that has changed. Today our interests are deeply into political and economic intelligence and they far transcend the geography of the Soviet Union. This country has important relations with most of the 150 nations of this world and that relationship is largely political and economic with most of them. ~~so~~ we have had to expand our skills, expand the topics that we cover and the geographical zones as well. I would suppose this is very much like what's happened in the newspaper business. You, too, have had to cover many more topics and many more areas. It's a challenge to us.

In addition, over these 30 years, the government of this country has frequently called upon the Central Intelligence Agency not only to provide intelligence information about what was going on in other parts of the world, but to help do something about it, to influence events. We call that political action, or covert action. And, here again, our product is changing because this country no longer has the same feeling that it wants to interfere in the internal events of other countries, that it wants to conduct political action. So, that portion of the Central Intelligence Agency's activities--product--is changing, is diminishing. So these are two important aspects of our changed product, but the second trend that I would like to highlight is the change in our production line itself.

Historically, the production line of intelligence has been the human intelligence agent - the spy. I don't know about Moses, but Joshua sent a couple of them into Jericho before he marched around with his trumpets and they've been with us ever since. But in the last decade and a half or so, there's been a revolution in how you collect

intelligence information. We now have amazing technical systems which bring in vast quantities of intelligence data. They challenge our analysts; challenge them to absorb, file, store, keep track of, collate, piece together, these pieces of information that come from these technical intelligence collection systems. Again, I would think this is very similar to one of the challenges that must beset you in the newspaper field. You, too, must be almost surfeited with information that comes in. But just as your reporters in the field have not been made obsolete by this, so too, the good, traditional, human intelligence agent has not either. We need them also. But the change in our production line today then is that we must meld these together, we must make the human and these increasing technical capabilities work as a team, to complement each other. It's a new and exciting challenge for us to do that. While we're about this, our third new trend is greater openness.

Traditionally, intelligence has operated under maximum secrecy and minimum disclosure. I don't think we can quite afford that anymore. We can't afford that because it's my belief that no public institution can survive in our country unless it does have support from the public. From about 1974 until 1978, there was intense public criticism of your country's intelligence activities. Some of it justified, much of it not. But there was not a great upswelling of public support when it was unjust criticism simply because the public had no foundation on which to judge, to ask whether or not these activities were not of great value to the country. And so, today, we're being more open, we're trying to let the public see what we do--enough to pass judgment upon us. We're making more speeches, unfortunately perhaps, we're participating in more conferences, symposiums; we're responding more forthrightly and completely

to your inquiries from the press and we're publishing more. Each week, this past year, we published on an average of two unclassified intelligence reports. I think that this is helping to tell the American public what we do. But let me suggest that I'm not going to try to coat the pill sweeter than it is, because we must retain our secrets. We must operate very largely under the cloak of secrecy or we can't operate at all. But I sincerely believe that, at the same time, by being more open we can also help to protect the necessary secrets that we must maintain. How?

Today there is so much classified information. It hangs on the shelf over here and it says secret, top secret, destroy before reading. Whatever it may be, there is too much of it and it doesn't engender the respect that it should. So, by declassifying as much as we can and publishing it, I hope to recreate that respect for the classified information which is left. And the fact that we don't have respect is indicated by the all too frequent instances of individuals who take it upon themselves to write articles, or books, which they do not then clear with us for a security check as they are often required to do by agreements which they have signed. That, I believe, is a trend that we cannot countenance or we will have chaos in our governmental process. We will have a principle whereby any one of the 215 million Americans can take it upon himself to decide what is in the interest of this country to keep secret and what is not. Now I'm not simply suggesting that you need take it from me or from us in the government that we're going to do this thing right and that we're not going to withhold publication in order to protect ourselves as we are generally accused of, but I'm suggesting

that you are protected by the fourth trend in American intelligence today which is greater oversight.

Out of a crucible of public criticism - that I mentioned - has come a very salutary oversight process. Because we must have secrets, we can't have full public oversight, but we can have what I call surrogate public oversight. Yours and the general public's surrogates are first the President and the Vice President, who today take an intense and continuing deep interest in our intelligence activities and are well on top of what we are doing. Next, something called the Intelligence Oversight Board that was created just two years ago -- former Senator Gore, former Governor Scranton, and Mr. Tom Farmer of this city -- three men who report only to the President of the United States and whose only task is to monitor the legality and the ethics of my, and all my support in this activity. And finally, we have in both the Senate and the House of Representatives an Oversight Committee for intelligence today and these committees give us a thorough scrutiny. I would suggest, particularly to you members of the media, when an individual comes to you and says it's really in the national interest to publish this or that, even though I am abrogating my secrecy agreement, you might well want to ask, but have you tried the oversight process, have you tried these mechanisms that have been established in order to give some means for individuals who do have a complaint about me, about anybody in the intelligence game, an opportunity to voice that complaint in a legitimate and a protected way. Whistle-blowers who blow first to the established oversight procedures, in my view, are the sincere whistle-blowers.

These four trends I have outlined I believe are dramatic, dynamic, and out of them I am very optimistic about the trends of American

intelligence today. We are, I believe, the number one intelligence community in the world and I assure you that it is my intent that we do everything we can to stay number one, but to do so in a way that will only strengthen our democratic institutions in this country.

Thank you.